Bone Black
PBk 9
Lightfastness I
Conforms to ASTM D 5098
#1010-2 / Series 1
2 fl. oz. / 59 ml
GOLDEN
ARTIST COLORS

Present

COLONIAL CARRION

a bone to pick

Editions Cafardnaüm are back to share this month's monomania...

This time, it's bone black. Made up of boiled, carbonated then crushed bones, bone black is used for its filtering, discoloring, whitening properties, its fertilizing qualities, and as a pigment.

EXTERIOR - Present-day Paris
Olfactive atmosphere: stagnant Seine water, damp old books.

YH develops a fascination for mummy brown: a pigment, pharmaceutical component, and fertilizer popular in 19th century United Kingdom and France. The original formula called for crushed mummified corpses, robbed from graves in Egypt. This trade swelled to such a sordid extent that "real" mummies became increasingly scarce. Import-export specialists began to manufacture mummies. Rumors swirl about how these mummies are produced…

It is said that when slaves and natives die their remains are tarred and laid out in the sun to dry before being loaded on boats and sent to France and England where they are crushed, jarred and distributed to vendors in big cities. It is said you can tell the mummies are inauthentic from the texture of the pigment - that it's no good for mixing with the usual solvents, too tarry and resinous. It is said that mummy brown lacks its pharmaceutical qualities when the cadavers it is made from are too fresh.

With this in mind, YH goes window shopping for mummy brown in Paris, in the Latin Quarter. She is looking to identify distributors of the pigment in the city, and to build an inventory of all the French paintings that have used "mummy brown" as a pigment for the brown and red hues in their paintings, including La Liberté guidant le peuple by Eugène Delacroix. She enters multiple former art material shops, to no avail. Most of these shops have since "become" orientalist and africanist antique dealers. There is no body left, just ghosts, and YH leaves feeling defeated.

INTERIOR – Present-day Valenciennes
Olfactive atmosphere: Hard for MCD to remember. Neutral small city. Rain.

MCD flips through a book published through the Genealogical & Historical Association of Flandre-Hainaut. In this genealogical and historical overview of the region and the industrial contributions of the Dervaux family, MCD comes across a detailed section detailing the "Sanitation problems linked to the Dervaux sugar refinery," replete with scans of primary sources, including reports and letters discussing the 1888 prefectural decree "forbidding all dumbing of diffusion waters in the department's waterways."

As it turns out, the Dervaux sugar refinery, which was established in 1836, and operated until 1901-1902, ran its sugaring operations under the duress of sanitary controversy around its environmental impact on the region. Twenty-six years of complaints from mayors in neighboring towns, from 1874 until 1901, raised the alarm about the considerable amounts of fish turning up dead in the river's offshoots as a result of the beet sugar factory's dangerous dumping practices. Much of the pollutive elements in question are by-products of beet-sugar refining, among which the by-products of the on-site bone char production.

EXTERIOR - Present day Wargnies-le-Grand
Olfactive atmosphere: Hard for MCD to remember. Neutral. Countryside.

MCD takes a taxi from Valenciennes to Wargnies-le-Grand (thirty minutes) to visit the site of the sugar refinery, and see what the river looks like today. In the taxi, they strike up a conversation with the cab driver about the research, and the river pollution. When he asks about who caused the pollution in the river, MCD answers "my family." He responds with enthusiasm that they need to pursue the research even if half their family turns their back on them, because corporate pollution and waste-dumping in the area is a big problem. As they discuss this, the taxi driver points to a large grassy hill on the side of the highway that they are speeding by, which is topped by a fence that extends across a wide expanse. The taxi driver says there is a large dump behind the fencing, and that he spends his weekends trash collecting with his family.

He drops MCD off at the site of the old sugar refinery in the small hamlet of Wargnies-Le-Grand. There are a few billboards and property walls pasted with the faces of Marine Le Pen and Jordan Bardella, candidates of the far-right, ahead of the 2024 legislative elections. A small river runs under a bridge and leads to a large field surrounded by a brick wall and various brick buildings. The river runs alongside the ruins of the old Dervaux refinery, into a tunnel, and further down to a small wood. MCD follows the river until it puddles into a cul de sac, where the wood starts, and the road twists away. The ruins of the sugar factory are all there. The field seems to still be in use, but unclear for what.

There is a metal footbridge that leads to a dirt road and the backside of the field and property. MCD crosses the footbridge to get closer to the hedges that protect the field. Dogs bark. MCD could walk further in…best not to. They meet the taxi driver at their agreed place and time, and both wish each other well when the taxi driver drops MCD off at the Valenciennes train station.

EXTERIOR - Paris, late 1700s, early 1800s
Olfactive atmosphere: Piss, shit and waste dumped in streets. Sickly smell of animal corpses rotting on street corners. Smell of animal remains being processed and burned in chemical establishments.

On the banks of the Seine and across the growing city of Paris, chemists and industrialists are burning, processing and transforming animal corpses, bones and gelatin to create a variety of products. Those products include everything from glue to mechanical oil to chemical compounds that are used to create fuel, fertilizer and ammunition. The stench of rotting carrion of combusting animal remains, of bone char, is overpowering.

In gilded halls and cushioned rooms, the price of sugar has jumped. First in 1791, and then permanently in 1804, Haitians beat back French overseers. They permanently abolish slavery on the island. In 1803, Napoleon sells Louisiana to the Americans. In 1806, he issues the Berlin Decree, forbidding all trade with the British empire, and decrees that all ships that have come in contact with British imperial ports are "de bonne prise", or liable to be treated as enemy ships and have their cargo confiscated. Without the edulcorated spoils of the slave trade, the French are left with a bitter taste in their mouth.

The Berlin decree induces a sort of artificial scarcity: cane sugar, coffee, cotton and indigo can no longer be imported from British settler and slave colonies. Prices jump for these products, which have become domestic staples for many mainland Europeans. It is under these particular circumstances that France, vying for its place as an actor of the imperial and slave trade, begins to invest in "homegrown" substitutes for these products: chicory for coffee, beet sugar for cane sugar, and pastel for indigo.

Sugar is at the crux of these negotiations. Napoleon and his administration inject exponential amounts of cash into the research and development of the beet sugar industry. In 1811, he assigns 32,000 hectares of land to the production of beet sugar. In 1812, he triples that amount of land to 100,000 hectares. He opens research schools dedicated to the production and perfection of beet sugar, and provides tax breaks and other benefits to industrialists to build the "indigenous" beet sugar industry to rival the

"colonial" import of cane sugar, now that France cannot as easily deport and enslave Africans to ensure the production of their sugar. The abolition of slavery is shuffling, like Tetris, how Europeans think about the value, the place/space/mobility, and the exploitation of human bodies and life.

Emploi du schiste bitumineux du lias dans la fabrication du gaz d'éclairage et de chauffage, et utilisation des résidus de cette fabrication comme charbons décolorants propres à remplacer le noir animal dans la clarification et la décoloration des jus, moûts et sirops, comme poudre désinfectante et engrais pulvérulents et comme ciments

Cote du dossier : 188102847

Numéro du brevet : 102847

Type du brevet : Brevet d'invention de 15 ans

Date de dépot : 15 04 1874

Déposant(s) / Mandataire(s)

- DE BELENET / juge au tribunal de première instance de Vesoul (Haute-Saô n° 252 / 291

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IMG. 1

As the beet sugar industry explodes, chemists across Europe compete to find ways to extract as much syrup and sugar from beets as possible. In doing so, scientists are also searching for ways to make its taste and appearance more "attractive": to bleach it, so that it isn't brown, but white.

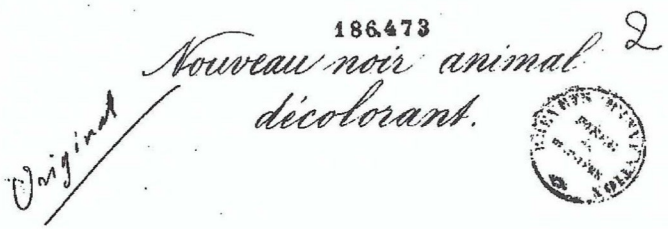
Several scientists boast that they have "discovered" the best way to bleach beet sugar: Anselm Payen is one of them. Himself the son of a Parisian chemist, Payen grew up seeing his father use bone char from animal carcasses to produce sal ammoniac, used in enamel for metalwork and also used in pharmaceutical products. In 1828 he is granted a patent for the "new mode of creating bone char for use in [sugar] refineries, for paint, and for the production of shoe polish."

Hundreds of patents circulate, purporting the best method to use bone char as a bleaching agent for beet sugar. Although the equipment and methods vary, the conceit is largely the same, gruesome one: to mix bone char into the melted beet syrup, and then rinse the char out to yield a clear syrup that can be dried into attractive, "decolored," white sugar.

While chemists are evangelizing the use of bone char as a bleaching agent, its use as a fertilizer across Western Europe is surging. The bone char that

is processed through the beet sugar bleaching process, which now includes added animal blood, leftover molasses and plant matter, is especially potent. Refiners sell it to hungry agro-industrialists looking to exploit crops in previously unexploited land across France, especially across Western France. The trade and sale of bones, bone char and char from refineries explode. In the year 1828 alone, 173 ships docked in the port of Nantes are full of bone char. The bone char trade is inter and intra-European, trading thousands of hectoliters of bone shipments between Nantes, Paris, Marseille, St. Petersburg, Anvers, Copenhagen, Stockholm, and more.

It is against this backdrop that shouts and murmurs of human remains being used as bone char start to crop up in the archive.



186473

Nouveau noir animal décolorant. 2

Original

IMG. 2

In 1833, a doctor Ségaud writes in to a Marseille periodical confirming rumors that there are human remains aboard a ship delivering bones from Algeria to sugar refineries. Moved by curiosity, Ségaud goes to the Marseille docks to investigate, and reports his findings to the paper: "I examined a good quantity of bones with the utmost attention, and recognized skeletons belonging to the human race," he writes. "I saw skulls, cubitus [elbows] and femurs, all of the adult class, that had recently been dug up, and were not entirely devoid of flesh."

Ségaud goes on to recommend the French stop trafficking human bones, at least in part because sugar refineries would suffer from reputational damage. As a final note, he adds that the French colonial politic in Algeria would be improved if they (the French) stopped trading the "bones of the ancestors" of "our enemies, the Arabs and Bedouins."

While Ségaud observes human remains from Algeria in a port in Marseille, French colonizers and soldiers are destroying and pillaging cemeteries, including the Bab-el-Oued and Bab-Azoun cemeteries in Algiers. In the archive, colonists record their speculations on the value of cemetery land, grave robbing, and their widespread digging up of buried people as they build roads, and seaview vistas atop those very bodies.

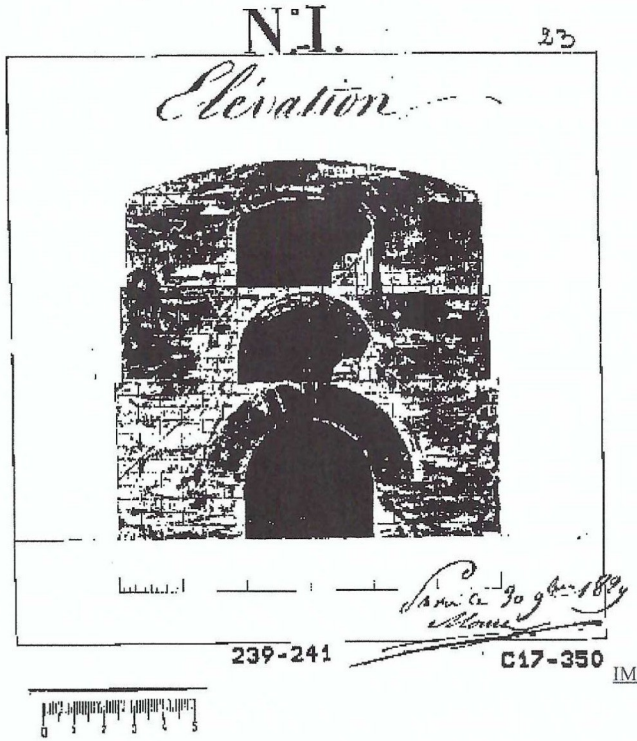
To boot, the French cultural archive is filled with theories, jokes, rumors, novellas and short stories that refer to the use of human remains in bone char. It seems common knowledge that the dead soldiers of the battle of Waterloo were collected by locals, and sold to make fertilizer for field crops.

Among others, Victor Hugo wrote in 1848, "The English papers say that millions of bushels of human bones were shipped from the continent to Hull. These bones, mixed with horse bones, were collected from the battlefields of Austerlitz, Leipzig, Iéna, Friedland, and Waterloo. They were transported into Yorkshire, where they were ground into a powder, and sent to Dorcaster, where they're being used as fertilizer. Such is what remains of the Emperor's victories: fattening up English cows."

In one human interest story from 1866, a Valenciennes newspaper publishes a story about a woman selling bones to the local bone merchant. The newspaper details that when the bone collector was left unattended in the woman's home, he saw a human jawbone on her counter. Thinking

that the jawbone "could not have belonged to a Christian," he pocketed it to include in his daily merchandise.

The jaw was in fact the woman's dentures, which she promptly noticed were missing when the bone collector left. When she realized what had happened, she went to the bone collector's home to retrieve them, and found them in a large pile of various animal bones he had collected. "Not everyone who loses their teeth finds them so easily," the article concludes.



IMG. 3

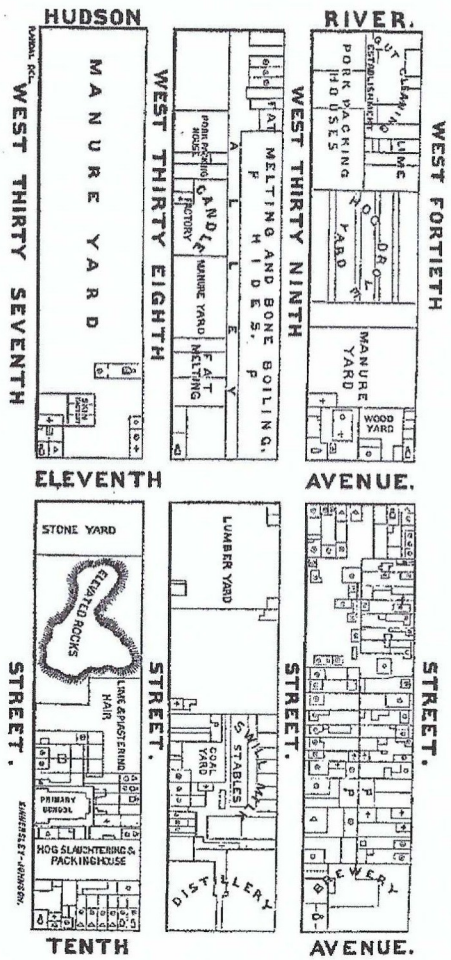
EXTERIOR - New York City, mid-1800s
Olfactive atmosphere: The smells of rotting carrion, pigstyes, piss and shit mix together. Smell of bones and flesh being boiled in large vats. Smell of slaughterhouses, fat rendering plants and meat packing waste. Stench from oil refineries floats across boroughs.

Across the Atlantic, New York industrialists are also using bone char for sugar refining and as fertilizer. The area north of 40th street in New York City, is largely undeveloped. It's inhabited by communities of free Black people and various newly-arrived European immigrants. It is also a thriving space of "nuisance industries", similar to those that are stinking up the outskirts of Paris: slaughterhouses, soap and candle factories, and bone-boiling establishments among others. Like in Paris, industrialists set up their putrid factories in places well away from rich folk, where they are less likely to face city ordinances. Of the bone boiling plants in upper Manhattan, one is located a few blocks from Seneca Village.

In an 1856 visit to the park, the landscape architect Frederick Olmsted declares, "...the low grounds were steeped in [the] overflow and mash of pig sites, slaughterhouses and bone boiling works and the stench was sickening."

Plans to build Central Park, and increase the value of the area, are approved in 1853, and so begins the process of evicting residents and closing down the area's "nuisance industries". The Board of Commissioners of Central Park insults and disparages the communities who live in the area, and in an 1857 report, declares "Some of the buildings are also occupied as foundries, rope walks, bone-burning establishments, etc. These generally are a nuisance; and by the number and class of persons who are employed in them, are more likely to be sources of annoyance and loss, than of profit."

For at least two years, the residents of Seneca Village fight city eviction orders and police forces sent to remove them. In 1857, Mayor Fernando Wood forcibly and permanently removes the Black land owners and residents of Seneca Village, and begins construction. The park is completed nineteen years later, in 1876.

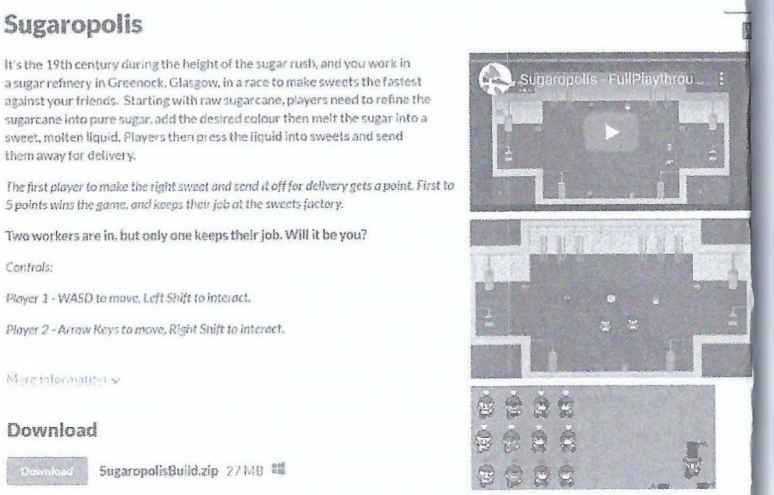


REGION OF BONE-BOILING AND SWILL-MILK NUISANCES.

IMG. 4

EXTERIOR: Greenock, Scotland - 1830s - 1870s
Olfactive atmosphere: Piss and shit mixed with the sickly sweet smell of molasses. Smells of burning animal bone and carcass. Smells of shipyard.

The city of Greenock, Scotland, is nicknamed "Sugaropolis": with more than 14 sugar refineries, the city is the beating heart of Scotland's sugar industry and, as such, flanks neighboring Glasgow, second city of empire. The air, which is thick with pollution and the smells of the sugaring factories, also stinks of bones drying, boiling and burning at Poynters, the local bone char factory. The plant, established in 1833, supplies all the local sugar refineries with their bone char needs.



IMG. 5

EXTERIOR: Greenock Scotland - 2014 onwards
Olfactive atmosphere: Unidentifiable, disgusting smell near the Greenock "bone factory".

Brimac Char Inc., which manages the Greenock "bone factory," formerly known as Poynters, is embroiled in a poison scandal. The *Greenock Telegraph* reveals that at least 2,000 tons of anthrax-contaminated bone char, oil and gelatin have been sitting on factory property in dangerous and unsanitary conditions for over thirteen years. A whistleblower informs the *Telegraph* that the company has been importing unlicensed animal bones from India and Pakistan. Journalists explain the cattle from these regions was contaminated with anthrax as an outcome of so-called "germ warfare". The paper denounces the Brimac management, who actively prevented workers from decontaminating the site to avoid having to pay for the cleanup.

Brimac and company management flee the premises, leaving the city and its residents to deal with the thousands of tons of poisoned bone char still lying on the factory floor. Having, for years, been supplying themselves in cattle bones from Mexico, it took less than a year for Brimac Char to re-establish its manufacturing operations in Reynosa, Mexico under the name Brimac Environmental Services de Mexico. It has been producing activated carbon there ever since.

IMG. 6

IMAGES IN TEXT AND TRANSLATION

IMG. 1
(P. 7) De Belenet. (1874). *Use of* lias *oil shale in the production of lamp and heating fuel, and use of the residual matter as decoloring char that can replace bone char in the clarification and decoloration of juice, must, and syrups, as a disinfecting powder, and pulverised fertilizer, and as cements.* (French patent n. 102847). Institut national de la propriété industrielle.

IMG. 2
(P. 8) Ducat. (1910). *New decoloring bone char* (French patent n. 186473). Institut national de la propriété industrielle.

IMG. 3
(P. 10) Monet, R. (1830). *Device and process for the production of coke, to cook gypsum, and to produce bone char and glass.* (French patent). Institut national de la propriété industrielle.

IMG. 4
(P. 12) Citizens' Association of New York. Council of Hygiene and Public Health (1865). *Region of Bone-Boiling and Swill-Milk Nuisances.*

IMG. 5
(P. 13) Screenshot of *Sugaropolis* video game.
https://discordance-games.itch.io/sugaropolis

IMG. 6
(P. 14) Greenock Telegraph Facebook post. (2023, July 11).

PHOTOS ON VELLUM

Layer of "Bone Black" acrylic paint, photographed with hand and paint tube. Acrylic paint, cling wrap. Photograph printed on vellum.

Smear of "Mummy" brown oil pastel with label. Oil pastel, cling wrap. Photograph printed on vellum.

IMAGES IN TEXT AND TRANSLATION

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IMG. 2

(P. 8) Ducat. (1[illegible]) [illegible] *char* (French patent n. 186473). [illegible] national de la [illegible]

IMG. 3

(P. 10). M[illegible] *[illegible] of coke, to cook gypsum, [illegible]* [illegible]tut national de la propriété [illegible]

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(P. 1[illegible]) [illegible] Health (186[illegible]) [illegible]

IMG. [illegible]

(P. 13) Scre[illegible] https://[illegible]

IMG. 6

(P. 14) Greenock Telegra[illegible] [illegible] 11)

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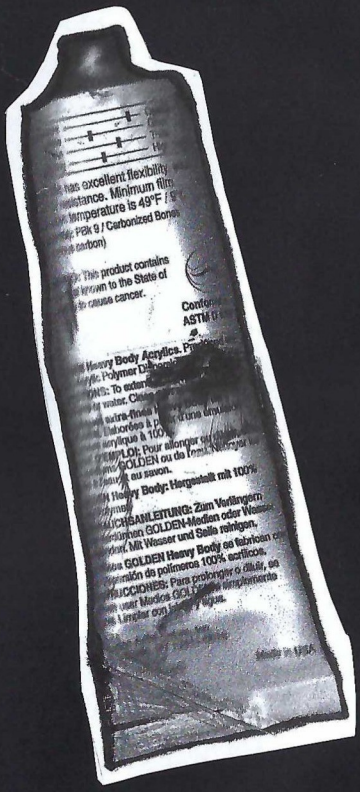
Smear of "Mummy" brown oil pastel with label. Oil pastel, cling wrap. Photograph printed on vellum.

GOLDEN
ARTIST COLORS

ÉDITIONS
CAPARDNAÜM


has excellent flexibility
resistance. Minimum film
temperature is 49°F /
Pbk 9 / Carbonized Bone
carbon)
This product contains
known to the State of
to cause cancer.
Heavy Body Acrylics.
Polymer
water.
acrylique à 100%
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au savon.
Heavy Body: Hergestellt mit 100%
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Mit Wasser und Seife reinigen.
GOLDEN Heavy Body se fabrican
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INSTRUCCIONES: Para prolongar o diluir, se
Medios GOLDEN únicamente
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